



State Representative **Mark Miloscia**



2007 Legislative Report

Representative **Mark Miloscia**

437A Legislative Building
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

E-mail:
Miloscia.Mark@leg.wa.gov

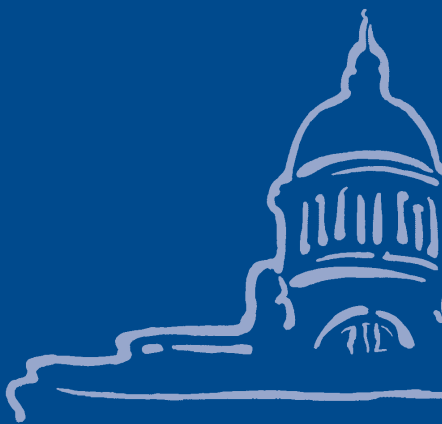
Website:
[http://hdc.leg.wa.gov/
members/miloscia](http://hdc.leg.wa.gov/members/miloscia)

Toll-free Hotline:
800-562-6000

Office:
360-786-7898

Committee Assignments:
Chair, Housing
Appropriations Subcommittee
on General Government &
Audit Review

State Government and Tribal
Affairs



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

The 2007 legislative session is history, and I'm happy to be back home.

As you'll see in this report, 2007 was a very good year for education and children in Washington. We also passed needed laws to improve public safety, protect our environment, provide services to vulnerable citizens and promote affordable health care and housing. We not only achieved these goals without raising state taxes, we prudently set aside \$724 million in reserves to help avoid budget problems in future years.

There is only enough space in this newsletter to cover some of the session highlights. If you'd like to hear about an issue not covered here, just let me know.

I also hope you'll remember that I serve as your representative all year long — and not only when the Legislature is in session. So please contact me with any questions, concerns or suggestions for new laws that you might have. Hearing from you is not only a pleasure, it helps me to be an effective voice for our community when key state decisions are made.

I'm honored to serve you. Let's keep in touch!

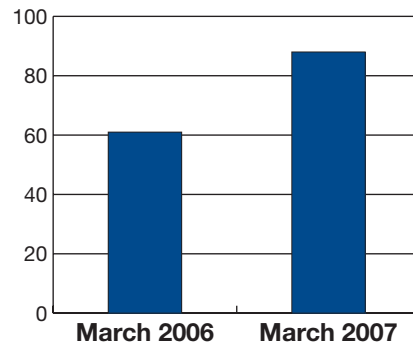
Sincerely,

Mark Miloscia

Putting the brakes on auto theft

There were 88 auto thefts in Federal Way this past March—a 44% increase over March 2006. Statewide, another car gets stolen every 11 minutes! We needed to get serious about stopping this epidemic. That's why I co-sponsored the new state law that:

- Toughens penalties for all car thieves, and especially repeat offenders;
- Makes it illegal to possess the tools of the trade, such as picklocks and false master keys; and
- Creates the Auto Theft Prevention Authority so we can target criminal rings that operate statewide.



Federal Way Auto Thefts

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Campaign finance reform

Would you pay \$3.36 a year—less than the price of one large latté—to ensure clean elections that put the public interest ahead of special interests? \$3.36 per person is the estimated cost of the Clean Elections reform I've proposed.

We have to do *something*. We've reached the point where 90% percent of elections for the U.S. and state House of Representatives are won by the candidates who spend the most money. Even worse, it is not uncommon for 80% or more of the campaign cash to come from *outside* the district the representative is supposed to serve!

My Clean Elections reform is modeled on reforms that cleaned up elections in Maine and Arizona. It allows candidates to get public financing *if* they (1) Collect \$5 contributions from at least 200 citizens who live in the legislative district; (2) Refuse any special interest contribution; and (3) Pledge to abide by strict campaign spending limits.

In 2006, 84 percent of all the Republicans and Democrats in the Maine Legislature ran clean campaigns, refused special interest donations and abided by strict spending limits. I say it's time for a serious debate on getting real campaign finance reform in *our* state. \$3.36 per person is a small price to pay for protecting our American ideals of democracy.

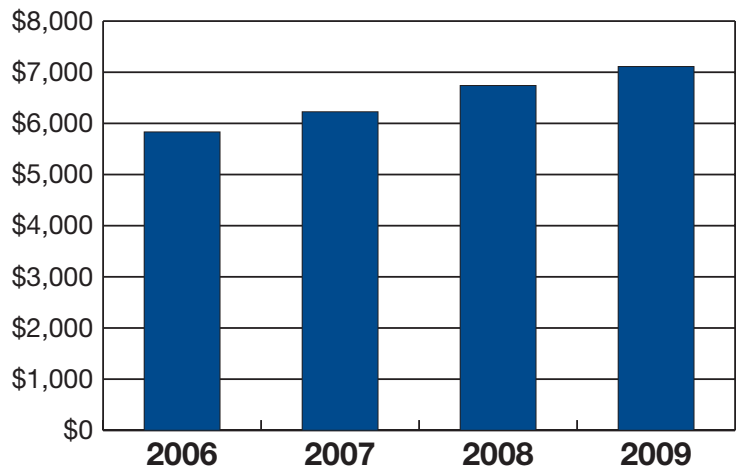
A good year for education

I'm proud of our local schools and of our local support for schools—people in the 30th District understand that education is the best investment we can make in children and our future. I have not always been proud of our *state's* support of schools, but I am happy to report that we made some very good progress this year:

- The new state budget increases public school funding by about \$900 per student over the next two years. Funding boosts for teacher salaries, class-size reduction, technology and transportation, special education, and improved learning assistance will be a big help to our schools.
- Record state investments in school construction will help schools and reduce the share of school construction costs paid by local property-tax levies.
- We launched an historic commitment to phase in voluntary all-day kindergarten statewide by funding all-day kindergarten where studies show it makes the biggest difference—in schools with high poverty rates.
- To help more students succeed in math and science, we dedicated state funds to enable schools to hire more teachers and increase professional development in math and science. The math portion of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) graduation requirement was delayed until 2013 to give math reforms time to work.
- After many years of trying, the Legislature finally agreed to allow a public vote on whether school levies should pass with a simple majority of votes. This is long overdue and a top priority of the P.T.A.

I'm also pleased that the budget includes needed salary equity funding (\$2.1 million) for Federal Way schools, and that lawmakers agreed to create a task force to develop new definitions and funding formulas for “basic education.”

Taken together, these gains will help make an unfair system of state education funding a little more fair. However, they are only a down payment on the changes our schools need. I hope every 30th District resident will join me in urging the state to do even better in supporting schools in the years ahead.



Higher per student funding will help schools.



Great schools help kids to achieve their dreams

Photo courtesy Federal Way Public Schools/
Tom Owen Photography

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Protecting vulnerable adults from abuse

A Federal Way woman with Down Syndrome thought she was safely on her way home when she was sexually assaulted by a bus driver in 2004. When the family sought justice, they found that Washington's severe penalties for abusing positions of trust to sexually exploit vulnerable adults did not apply to transportation workers.

No Washington family will suffer a similar tragedy without having recourse to justice that fits the crime. I worked with Republicans and Democrats to pass legislation I sponsored that applies severe penalties for transportation workers who abuse their positions to exploit vulnerable adults. It was signed into law on April 10.

Progress on housing

As Chair of the Housing Committee in the House of Representatives, I feel good about steps we took this year to reduce homelessness and promote affordable housing for the most vulnerable individuals and families:

- Fresh investments in Washington's highly successful Housing Trust Fund will help local communities build and preserve affordable housing.
- The Legislature passed my proposal for a \$14 million increase in funds to help counties fight homelessness. Counties have done an excellent job of tailoring state resources to local circumstances and needs. This new funding will make a big difference to local efforts to reduce homelessness.
- For the first time, the state addressed the shocking levels of homelessness among former foster children. Temporary housing stipends and services will give these deserving youth a fair chance to stabilize their lives and seek stable employment.
- Lawmakers agreed with me that property tax assessments should not be based on the highest and best use for a property when that use is not permitted under existing zoning, planning ordinances, or other government restrictions. This will help to preserve affordable housing and is also a matter of basic fairness.
- New tax incentives and affordable loans will also help local governments to promote affordable housing.

One disappointment: the Legislature did not pass my Affordable Housing for All reform, which would put a greater emphasis on local control, measurable results and problem prevention in future efforts to ensure affordable housing. I'll keep working on this reform.

Lawmakers heed local needs

In addition to record investments in school construction, the new state capital budget includes strong support for local needs. 30th District lawmakers worked together in a bipartisan spirit to advocate for our communities, and this teamwork produced good results, including:

Camp Kilworth Nearshore Preservation

– \$2.1 million in state funds will help Federal Way buy the beautiful Camp Kilworth. Purchasing Camp Kilworth, which has been a Boy Scout camp for 70 years, will also preserve a fine stretch of Puget Sound shoreline that is habitat for Chinook salmon and other wildlife.



Camp Kilworth is a local treasure.

Saghalie Park Soccer Field Renovation

– This \$300,000 state grant will help Federal Way convert the sand soccer field to synthetic turf. The new playing field will cut maintenance costs and allow almost continuous use – an additional 1,600 games and practices are expected.

West Hylebos Park Boardwalk Replacement

– A \$300,000 grant will help to replace the deteriorating boardwalk, which is key to preserving opportunities for recreation, exercise and education at this very special forested wetland. Many thanks to the Friends of the Hylebos Wetlands for making this park a wonderful community resource.

Federal Way Little League Field Lighting

– Little League is a great way for kids to learn values like teamwork. The state funding for lighting will allow the field to host night games and tournaments. Adding games also boosts concession revenues that support scholarships (\$50,000).

Keeping our priorities straight

I respect fans who support basketball, auto racing and other sports. However, I do *not* believe state government should spend public tax dollars to build race tracks and sports centers for professional sports developers. That's why I opposed requests to pour well over \$500 *million* state tax dollars into two new sports facilities -- a proposed NASCAR track near Bremerton and a new Sonics arena.

The International Speedway Corporation, which proposed the race track, earns nearly \$820 million annually. Similarly, the Oklahoma businessmen who own the Seattle Sonics are millionaires many times over. It doesn't make sense to help multi-millionaires build private sports facilities at the expense of education and other public priorities; so I'm happy the Legislature resisted their requests for our tax dollars.



Health care for kids

The vast majority of people in every part of our 30th district—whether they're from Algonia, Pacific, Milton, Federal Way or elsewhere—agree with the goal that all Washington children should have access to health coverage by the year 2010. As a strong supporter of this goal, I'm happy to report that we are well on the way to achieving it.

This year, we expanded health coverage to fully 39,000 of the state's 73,000 uninsured children from lower-income families. Importantly, we also increased Medicaid rates for pediatricians, to encourage them to take more low-income Medicaid patients.

The *mental* health of children was also a top session priority. New investments in mental health services for low-income children will help ensure that kids get needed treatment before problems get out of hand and result in self-destructive or criminal behavior.

Untreated physical or mental illness takes a terrible toll on children and results in massive public costs up the road. These steps are morally right *and* smart budget policy.



**Rep. Miloscia with
page Sarah Cross.**

Keeping up with the Legislature

An easy way to track bills and votes is by visiting the state Legislature's official website, at: <http://www.leg.wa.gov/legislature/>

There, you'll find information on everything from legislative bills to state history and culture.

If you'd like to contact me personally, feel free to call our toll-free hotline at:
800.562.6000
(Hearing Impaired: **800.635.9993**)

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WA STATE DEPT
OF PRINTING 98501

Printed on recycled paper